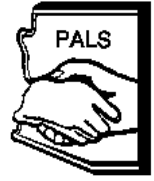




INFORMATION SHEET

Parent Information Network



Multiple Disabilities

What are Multiple Disabilities?

According to the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) § 15-761(17), " 'Multiple disabilities' means learning and developmental problems resulting from multiple disabilities as determined by evaluation that cannot be provided for adequately in a program designed to meet the needs of children with less complex disabilities. Multiple disabilities include any of the following conditions that require the provision of special education and related services:

- (a) Two or more of the following conditions
 - (i) Hearing impairment.
 - (ii) Orthopedic Impairment.
 - (iii) Moderate mental retardation.
 - (iv) Visual impairment.

(b) A child with a disability listed in subdivision (a) of this paragraph existing concurrently with a condition of mild mental retardation, emotional disability or specific learning disability."

In addition, the ARS, § 15-761(18) notes " 'Multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment' means multiple disabilities that include at least one of the following:

(a) Severe visual impairment or severe hearing impairment in combination with another severe disability.

(b) Severe visual impairment and severe hearing impairment."

Severe and/or multiple disabilities are terms used to describe the often intense and complex combinations of medical, physical, developmental, and/or behavioral characteristics an individual might have.

How Common are Multiple Disabilities?

In the 2004-05 school year, 2,234 Arizona students were classified as having multiple disabilities (MD), multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairments (MDSSI), or deaf-blind (DB) received special education services. This number represents .21% of the 1,053,506 children enrolled in Arizona

public schools as of October 1, 2004 and accounts for 1.86% of the total special education population.

What Effect Do Multiple Disabilities Have on a Child?

Depending on the type and severity of a child's disabilities, he or she will most likely require on-going support in more than one major life skill area. A team of educators and therapists will work closely with the student and his/her family to plan a successful educational program. The individualized program will include a variety of supports to meet the student's educational, language, social, vocational, and functional skill development. Accommodations for medication schedules, special diets and adaptive equipment may be included.

An important part of the evaluation process is consideration of Assistive Technology (AT) services. AT can include a wide-range of options from low-technology pictorial schedules and assignments to high-technology communication boards or computers.

The individual with multiple disabilities can engage in a wide variety of useful and satisfying activities in school, the community and workplace. Community-based instruction is an important part of the older student's IEP and includes transition planning for post-school work, living arrangements, managing health care, recreation and leisure activities, daily living skills and self-determination.

References

- Heward, W. L. & Orlansky, M. D. (1999). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Co.
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (2004). *Severe and/or Multiple Disabilities, Fact Sheet #10*. Washington, DC: NICHCY.

Resources

Books

- Batshaw, M.D., M. (2001). *When your child has a disability: A complete sourcebook of daily and medical care*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, www.brookespublishing.com
- Downing, J. E. (2002). *Including students with severe and multiple disabilities in typical classrooms: Practical strategies for teachers*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, www.brookespublishing.com
- Orelove, R., Sobsey, D., and Silberman, R. (2004). *Educating Children with Multiple Disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, www.brookespublishing.com
- Schwier, K., and Stewart, E. (2005) *Breaking bread, nourishing connections: People with and without disabilities together at mealtime*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, www.brookespublishing.com

Video Tapes

- PLAI (promoting learning through active interaction): A guide to early communication with young children who have multiple disabilities*, Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, www.brookespublishing.com
- Program Development Associates, P.O. Box 2038
Syracuse, NY 13220-2038, 800-543-2119,
www.disabilitytraining.com

Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

- Arc of Arizona, Inc., The, 5610 S. Central Ave.,
Phoenix, AZ 85040, 602-243-1787, 800-252-9054, www.arcarizona.org
- Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities, 1789 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85005-6123, 602-542-0419, 866-229-5553, www.azdes.gov/ddd
- Arizona State School for the Deaf and the Blind, www.asdb.state.az.us, 1200 W. Speedway, P.O. Box 85000, Tucson, AZ 85754-5000, 520-770-3700, 1000 E. Butler, Ste. 115, Flagstaff, AZ 86004, 928-774-0655

DB-LINK , The National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind, 345 N. Monmouth Ave, Monmouth, OR, 97361, 800-438-9376, TTY 800-854-7013 , www.tr.wou.edu/dblink

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN), www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013, 800-695-0285, www.nichcy.org

National Federation of the Blind of Arizona, 311 W. McNair St., Chandler, AZ 85225-1735, 480-898-1188, www.nfbarizona.com

National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD), P.O. Box 1968, Danbury, CT 06813-1968, 800-999-6673, www.rarediseases.org

Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHCN), AZ Department of Health Services, 150 N. 18th Ave. Ste. #330, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-1860, www.hs.state.az.us/phs/ocshcn

Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-3852, 800-352-4558, www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals

Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central, Ste.200, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007, www.raisingpecialkids.org

TASH, Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities, 29 W. Susquehanna Ave., Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21204, 410-828-8274, www.tash.org/ and www.arizonatash.org

United Cerebral Palsy, Central AZ, Inc., 1802 W. Parkside Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85027, 602-943-5472, 888-943-752, www.ucp.org/ucp_localsub.cfm/30/7005
Southern Arizona, Inc. 3941 E. 29th St., Ste. 603, Tucson, AZ, 85711, 520-795-3108, www.ucpsa.org